DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 042 675 SO 000 240

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| AUTHOR | Angell, Robert C. |
| TITLE | Implications of the SRSS Project for College Instruction. |
| INSTITUTION | American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C. |
| SPONS AGENCY | National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C. |
| PUB DATE | Sep 70 |
| NOTE | 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C., September, 1970 |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.45 |
| DESCRIPTORS | *College Curriculum, *Curriculum Evaluation, Curriculum Problems, Inductive Methods, *Inquiry Training, *Senior High Schools, Social Studies, *Sociology |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Sociological Resources for the Social Studies, SRSS |

ABSTRACT

The impact of the Sociological Resources for the Social Studies Project (SRSS) on colleges is discussed under three general categories: 1) the effect on instructional materials and inquiry methods used in college sociology classes and laboratories with respect to student research and value analysis; 2) the effect on college course prerequisites and their arrangement in the curriculum with freshmen able to enter advanced sociology courses and wishing to study sociology as a major; and, 3) the effect on the relations between sociology departments and schools of education in the training and certification of prospective high school teachers. SO 000 241, SO 000 245, SO 000 246, SO 000 247, and ED 035 583 are related documents. (SBE)

ED042675

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# IMPLICATIONS OF THE SRSS PROJECT FOR COLLEGE INSTRUCTION

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*Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association*

*Washington, D. C.*
*September, 1970*

SO 000 240

the American Sociological Association

Sociological Resources for the Social Studies, a project sponsored by ASA and supervised by the Committee on the Social Studies Curriculum of American Secondary Schools, has been supported by the National Science Foundation for six years. The objective has been to plan and produce a variety of sociological materials of good quality of interest to senior high school students. The project is nearing completion. A series of more than twenty short units called episodes began to appear last January. It will be completed in the fall of 1971. The first four of seven readings books consisting of good research articles rewritten for the high school audience have been published. A one-semester sociology course entitled *Inquiries in Sociology* is finished but will not be published for more than a year. These three kinds of materials can be used in various combinations according to the needs of high school classes and the desires of the teachers.

The episodes and the sociology course strongly emphasize the inquiry mode of teaching and learning. Many exercises are required in which the students either obtain their own sociological data or are presented with suitable data for analysis. Although we have not laid as much stress on it as have some other projects, we occasionally suggest that the high school class explore the social consequences of alternative value preferences.

For each of the episodes and for the sociology course there is an Instructors' Guide that is almost as full as the student text. This is necessary because so few high school teachers are well equipped to deal with the sort of innovative teaching strategies that the SRSS materials require.

My four years with this project have convinced me that it and projects like it in other social science fields will have considerable impact on instruction at the college level. I shall discuss this impact under three general heads: (1) the effect on instructional materials and methods, (2) the effect on the prerequisites for college courses and their arrangement in the curriculum, and (3) the effect on relations between sociology departments and schools of education.

As I look back on my own career of forty-six years of teaching at The University of Michigan I am appalled by the fact that in 1968 we were teaching courses in very much the same way as we were in 1922. Although theses at the graduate level had become much more inductive, undergraduates were not being sent out to gather data much more often in the sixties than they were in the twenties. Throughout my career as an undergraduate teacher I did relatively little lecturing but the involvement of students in the sociological content of their courses was through class discussion of written materials for the most part, not through original analysis of data. I am sure that the students acquired a good deal of sociological knowledge but I am afraid they got a very inadequate appreciation of how sociologists learned what they know. It is this kind of experience that SRSS materials have been trying to give students. Once students who have been exposed to such methods of work in high school reach the college campus they will be unhappy with traditional sociology courses at that level.

It is not going to be easy to pursue the inquiry method in college classes. For one thing, it takes a great deal of time to think through suitable exercises and to prepare the instructions for carrying them out. This is particularly so if a class project is contemplated. The allocation of functions and the organization of the results demand a great deal of teacher time. Nor can exactly the same study be carried out semester after semester. College students of late have been very critical of laboratory work in the natural sciences as "busy work." Social scientists must be careful not to lead students down a path of allegedly original research only to arrive at a predetermined goal.

There are a great many types of exercise that could be carried out in college classes. Since one has to be careful not to "wear out" a college community by repeated questionnaire or interview studies, it is probably wise to do such studies only within the college population. The subject on which classes might

wish to conduct research in this population are, however, legion. Especially in these days of strong views on both academic and public issues, there should be no difficulty in fixing upon hypotheses regarding factors related to student attitudes that could be tested.

Observational studies can of course be conducted not only in the college community but also in the community in which the college is located. Patterns of land use, traffic studies, rates of participation in various recreational activities, and changes of activity in the daily and weekly cycle are a few of the possible subjects for observational research.

The third type might be called institutional case studies. The patterns of relationships that characterize churches, schools, stores, factories, and governmental agencies could be investigated. If the entry problem is difficult, various units within a large university could serve as the cases. If possible, hypotheses should be developed before research is undertaken in order to avoid results that are not comparable.

One of the simplest kinds of student research is to replicate with a new population what sociologists have already done. One can always discover whether a sample of college freshmen, for instance, rate occupations in the same way that has been found to be true of adults generally.

For sociopsychological topics, classroom experiments are a possibility. These would have to be changed from semester to semester to prevent contamination of the results from class to class.

These exercises I have been discussing all depend on new data obtained by the students outside the classroom or through a classroom experiment. There are, of course, many kinds of exercises of a more traditional sort that can be developed by giving the students raw data and requiring their analysis. This is the easiest kind of exercise to assign and carry out but it robs the students of any experience

with the data-gathering step in research. It should probably therefore not be the only type of exercise that is used.

Finally, SRSS has an example in its sociology course of what might be called an exercise in value analysis. Here the students are presented with two alternatives for the location of a cement plant. They are stimulated to discover what the various consequences of the two locations would be for the corporation itself, for the workers, and for the public in the surrounding territory. They then are required to weigh these alternatives in terms of their conception of American values and reach a conclusion.

A second major implication of SRSS activity for the colleges is that, if our sociology course is widely taught in high schools, college departments of scoiology will have to think about the impact on their curricular offerings. Many high school students will be arriving at the college gates with as good a preparation in sociology as they now have after taking a community college introductory course. They probably will not have quite as detailed coverage of the field as they get in a solid semester in a four-year institution. Each type of college will have to decide how to deal with this situation. Some may decide to allow high school students who have had our course to go directly into more advanced classes. Others may decide to give placement tests. Perhaps still others will develop a special course to follow the SRSS course so as to supplement it with those aspects of sociology not there dealt with.

Another possible effect of a larger enrollment in sociology in high school might be an earlier decision in college to make sociology the students' major subject. This in turn might suggest the opening up of courses in statistics and other requirements for the major to sophomores. This would make possible a better balance between sociology and other subjects in the last three college years. In many institutions today a student who decides to major in sociology

has only had two courses before he becomes a junior and thereafter is compelled to concentrate to a degree that limits his opportunity to take courses in other departments.

The third implication of the adoption of SRSS materials by American high schools is the dire need for colleges and universities to give a better training to prospective high school teachers. This in turn implies a much more adequate representation of sociology in the training of these teachers.

One of the principal issues here is an organizational one. Should the improved learning of sociology be achieved in sociology departments or in schools of education? It would seem preferable to have it occur in sociology departments were it not for the widespread disinterest of professional sociologists in cooperating closely with colleagues in schools of education to provide courses that are especially suitable for prospective teachers at the high school level. The involvement of approximately one hundred sociologists in various aspects of the SRSS project may in the years just ahead increase the degree of that cooperation. If it does not, then a better answer is to encourage schools of education to put sociologists on their staffs. This solution has the dual advantage that the courses given by the sociologists will be tailored to the needs of the prospective teachers and that close collaboration with the professors of social studies teaching methods will be easy. The latter is most important if prospective teachers are to become skillful in the conduct of inquiry learning.

Another facet of this third general subject is the certification of high school teachers in sociology. In most states sociology can only be certified as a minor, not a major. This means that the teachers so certified may be quite inadequately trained to teach a course as demanding as our *Inquiries in Sociology*. We have to admit, however, that what little research we have done in connection with our project does not indicate that a large number of traditional courses in sociology always produces good high school teaching. There is always the danger

that a liberal arts student who has had the thirty semester hours normally expected of a major in sociology will attempt to conduct his high school class at too sophisticated a level. There is one advanced course, however, that we have found to be necessary for satisfactory inquiry teaching. That is an introductory course in research methods. Most social studies teachers are history majors, many of whom find it very difficult to direct a class carrying out inductive exercises. Quite as important as a course in research methods, however, is a course in teaching methods that emphasizes the inquiry mode. This supports the argument for having the training in sociology in schools of education. It also suggests that sociologists who are attached to schools of education should be the ones to take the lead in efforts to improve the certification requirements.

SRSS has implications in directions other than college instruction. It has implications, for instance, for the American Sociological Association itself. It may point to the need for projects like SRSS at other school levels. It may point to the need for a special category of membership in ASA for high school teachers of sociology or for a journal attuned to their needs or for a service center and clearing house for information within ASA headquarters. But these are questions beyond the scope of this paper. SRSS activities will, I think, provide quite enough problems for college professors to worry about in the next few years.